1. In the space below, describe the stasis at the beginning of the play NOT THE FILM of Real Women Have Curves. In other words, “Where are we?” “When is it (time, day, and year)?” “Who are the people involved?” “What is the dramatic situation in which the characters find themselves as the play unfolds?”

This play begins in a small sewing factory in Los Angeles in 1987. It is the end of September and we enter with the women as they start up the factory for the day at 6:15 AM. There are 5 characters in the play; Ana, Carmen, Estela, Rosali, and Pancha. The dramtic situation is that we’ve just found out Estela is undocumented and in debt, meaning she could lose her factory and be deported is they can’t finish a large dress order in time for payment.  
  
2. What is the intrusion that causes the stasis to be broken in the play and the dramatic action to develop, often at an increasingly rapid pace, to the end of the play?

It could be argued that there are several instances of intrusion. However, I think that the moment when Estela tells the other women about her papers and her debt takes the cake. This is a real issue within their community, and really upsets the stasis at the beginning of the play by adding a tone of anxiety and anguish.  
  
3. Why do the events of the play take place at this particular time and place? In other words, what is the unique factor which is out of the ordinary that causes a turn of events to take place?

The unique factor is that this is the day Ana writes her story and tells it to us.  
  
4. State the dramatic questions that must be answered by the end of the play? (Ordinarily, the dramatic question shares a close connection with the intrusion.)

The dramatic question is will they finish the dress order in time to save Estela and her factory?  
  
5. Use Ana, the central character, to answer the questions. Ball says, a character is revealed by what he/she does, that is, the dramatic actions that are taken by that character. Examine what Ana wants (NOTE: In Real Women Ana's wants seem to be in flux. They change as the play progresses). The wants of a character often encounter obstacles that get in the way of achieving those wants. Ball says there are 4 kinds of obstacles that frustrate the wants of a character. They are: a. Me against myself, b. Me against another individual, c. Me against society (that is law, social norms, etc.) and, d. Me against fate, the universe, natural forces, God or the gods. In answering these questions be sure to point to the particular obstacles that demonstrate these obstacles.

Ana wants to go to college and become a writer. She runs into several obstacles along the way, among them are time constraints, her new job at the factory, and her family’s lack of support for her academic education. Ana feels a sense of loyalty to her family which is something that prevents her from striking out on her own- me against myself. It could be said that her mother is another obstacle because of how adamant she is about Ana working- me against another individual.   
  
6. The most important information in most plays takes place during theatrical moments. Identify the most theatrical moments in Real Women Have Curves.

One of the first theatrical movements is the fight between Carmen and Estela, when Estela insists she wants to change the way her factory is run but her mother argues, saying that her way is better. This creates a conflict of authority right from the get go.

7. Provide at least three examples of images in Real Women. How does the title of the play help us understand the images in the play? (Remember Ball says that, “An image is the use of something we know that tells us something we don’t know.” He goes on to say that images invoke and expand, rather than define and limit.”)

One image I think of right off the bat is when Estela comes into work visibly distressed because of something her romantic interest did and she has to visibly pull herself together. Another image is the beginning of Scene three where the women enter wearing the same clothes as the day before and Carmen smells her pits, emphasizing the heat and difficulty of the job under the strict constraints they are working within (to save Estela). And lastly, and probably one of the most visually interesting scenes in the play, is the scene where the women strip down due to the heat.  
  
8. Ordinarily, there are many themes in most plays. List the themes in Real Women.

Themes within the play center around how women are portrayed and affected within the Hispanic community. It also focuses on issues of poverty within the Hispanic community and how these issues are magnified by the question of documented vs undocumented immigrants.

9. Most American plays have something to do with family and/or family relationships. What does family have to do with the dramatic action in Real Women? Is family redefined in this play? If so, how and why?

I think this play is perhaps the most focused on family out of any of the other plays we have read so far. For one thing it focuses on an actual family, and for another, the role of family within the Hispanic community is very close knit. This play really shows how the women in the family will do anything to support and bolster each other. It also shows the importance of elders in their community.